



**University of  
Zurich**<sup>UZH</sup>

**Zurich Open Repository and  
Archive**

University of Zurich  
University Library  
Strickhofstrasse 39  
CH-8057 Zurich  
[www.zora.uzh.ch](http://www.zora.uzh.ch)

---

Year: 2019

---

## Mary (person)

Janz, Stephanie

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-179032>

Book Section

Published Version

Originally published at:

Janz, Stephanie (2019). Mary (person). In: Helmer, Christine; McKenzie, Steven L; Römer, Thomas; Schröter, Jens; Dov Walfish, Barry; Ziolkowski, Eric. Encyclopedia of the Bible and its reception: Lotus-Masrekah. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1116-1117.

*Women in Context* (New York 1988). ■ Miranda, J., *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (trans. J. Eagleson; Maryknoll, N.Y. 1974). ■ Miranda, J., *Communism in the Bible* (trans. R. Barr; Maryknoll, N.Y. 1982). ■ Mosala, I., *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1989). ■ Moxnes, H., *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, Ky. 2003). ■ Myles, R., "Opiate of Christ; or, John's Gospel and the Spectre of Class," *Postscripts* 7.3 (2016) 257–77. ■ Petterson, C., *Acts of Empire: The Acts of the Apostles and Imperial Ideology* (Taipei 2012). ■ Petterson, C., *From Tomb to Text: The Body of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (London 2016). ■ Pixley, J., *On Exodus: A Liberation Perspective* (trans. R. Barr; Maryknoll, N.Y. 1987). ■ Simkins, R. A., "Patronage and the Political Economy of Ancient Israel," *Semeia* 87 (1999) 123–44. ■ Sneed, M., *The Politics of Pessimism in Ecclesiastes: A Social-Science Perspective* (Atlanta, Ga. 2012). ■ Stalin, I. V., "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," in *Works*, vol. 14 (London 1936) 199–239. ■ Ste. Croix, G. E. M. de, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1981). ■ Veerkamp, T., *Die Welt anders: Politische Geschichte der Großen Erzählung* (Hamburg 2012). ■ West, G., *The Academy of the Poor: Towards a Dialogical Reading of the Bible* (London 1999). ■ West, G., *The Stolen Bible: From Tool of Imperialism to African Icon* (Leiden 2016). ■ Yee, G., *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn. 2003). ■ Yee, G., "Recovering Marginalized Groups in Ancient Israel: Methodological Considerations," in *To Break Every Yoke: Essays in Honor of Marvin L. Chaney* (ed. R. Coote/N. K. Gottwald; Sheffield 2007) 10–27.

Roland T. Boer

See also → Communism, The Bible and; → Lenin (Ul'ianov), Vladimir Il'ich; → Marx, Karl

## Marxsen, Willi

Willi Marxsen (1919–1993) was a German NT scholar. Between 1945 and 1948, he studied Protestant theology at the University of Kiel, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the institution narratives in Mark ("Die Einsetzungsberichte zum Abendmahl," 1948). In 1954, he was given the *venia legendi* by the same faculty. His habilitation ("second book") dealt with the redaction of Mark (*Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums*). After the publication of his second book, he was often referred to as the creator of the term "redactional history" (*Redaktionsgeschichte*). From 1956 to 1961, Marxsen was professor for NT studies at the Kirchliche Hochschule Bethel; from 1961 until his retirement in 1984 he held a professorship at the University of Münster.

Marxsen's work focused on NT Christology. Regarding the interrelation of the historical Jesus and the post-Easter proclamation of Christ, Marxsen developed the term "kerygma" as defined by Bultmann and distinguished between a Christ-kerygma and a Jesus-kerygma. On the one hand, the personal Christ-kerygma may be perceived in the scriptures by Paul or John. The traditions adopted in the synoptic gospels, on the other hand, show signs of a

functional Jesus-kerygma, according to which Jesus brings about the kingdom of God and, as a result, embodies the substance of the kerygma.

Continuity between ante- and post-Easter faith corresponds to the distinction within the kerygma. Death at the cross and resurrection are not understood as a sharp break. Rather, resurrection is seen as an *interpretamentum* that marks a new beginning after Jesus' death. Easter then means that – in spite of the "catastrophe" of Good Friday – the "matter Jesus" lives on. Thus, the term does not designate teaching material that can be detached from the person of Jesus. Rather, it refers to a new perspective of faith by way of Jesus. This perspective finds a new expression and it develops into a belief in the resurrected Christ.

The focus on faith is also reflected in Marxsen's distinction between "Christian" and Christian ethics. This distinction refers to faith as the foundation of ethical behavior, on the one hand, and the concrete formulation of ethical maxims in Christian tradition, on the other hand.

The diverse titles of his commentaries on 1/2 Thess mirror Marxsen's judgment on the issue of authenticity. While he considers 1 Thess to be an authentic Pauline epistle, he regards 2 Thess as a pseudonymous post-Pauline scripture. Marxsen was committed to a theologically rigorous exegetical analysis. His analyses sought to emphasize that NT language is highly allegorical and that it seeks to clearly formulate its belief.

**Bibliography:** ■ Marxsen, W., "Die Einsetzungsberichte zum Abendmahl" (PhD diss.; Kiel University, 1948). ■ Marxsen, W., *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (FRLANT 49; 1956); ET: id., *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville, Tenn./New York 1969). ■ Marxsen, W., *Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme* (Gütersloh 41978 [1963]). ■ Marxsen, W., *Die Auferstehung Jesu als historisches und theologisches Problem* (Gütersloh 1964). ■ Marxsen, W., *Der Exeget als Theologe: Vorträge zum Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh 1968). ■ Marxsen, W., *Die Sache Jesu geht weiter* (Gütersloh 1976). ■ Marxsen, W., *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (ZBK 11/1; Zurich 1979). ■ Marxsen, W., *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief* (ZBK 11/2; Zurich 1982). ■ Marxsen, W., "Christliche" und christliche Ethik im Neuen Testament (Gütersloh 1989).

Paul-Gerhard Klumbies

See also → Redaction Criticism

## Mary (Person)

### 1. Mother of Jesus

Mary is the mother of Jesus according to all four canonical gospels and Acts (see "Mary [Mother of Jesus]").

## 2. Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is a female follower of Jesus who appears in all four canonical gospels (see "Mary Magdalene").

Dale C. Allison Jr.

## 3. Of Bethany

We meet Mary of Bethany, sister to Martha and to Lazarus, in the Gospel of John. Here, Mary and her siblings figure in two episodes: the miracle story in which Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44) and John's account of the anointing of Jesus (12:1–8). Before we come to John, however, it is worth noting that readers of Luke will easily recognize the two sisters from the engaging glimpse of them in a domestic setting with Jesus as their guest in Luke 10:38–42. There we find Martha, hands full with serving, appealing to Jesus for her sister's help while Mary, who has chosen "the good portion," sits silently at his feet and hears his word. Only in John, however, do we learn that their home is in Bethany and that they have a brother called Lazarus.

The story of the raising of Lazarus in John 11 is the turning point in John's Gospel plot. On the one hand, the miracle is the climactic "sign" of the public ministry while, on the other, its consequences for Jesus himself mark it out as decisive for his journey to the cross. The roles that John assigns the sisters relate to these two aspects of John's narrative. Thus, the active and articulate Martha becomes Jesus' dialogue partner in the key scene where he defines the significance of the miracle in the lapidary words, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25–27). For the contemplative Mary, however, John reserves a role that relates to the darker aspect of his narrative as a catalyst for Jesus' own fate.

A key observation in this regard is that John's presentation of Jesus in relation to the Bethany family anticipates his teaching to the disciples in 15:12–14 in which, following his restatement of the love command (cf. 13:34), Jesus points to his readiness to lay down his life for them as friends as the supreme expression of that love. In ch. 11, John illustrates this teaching in two particular respects. First, by the fact that this is the first occasion in the Gospel where he defines Jesus' relationship to others as one of love. He makes this clear from the outset, where the sisters' message to Jesus describes Lazarus as "he whom you love," and also by adding that this affection extends to the whole family (11:3, 5). Similarly, as the story progresses, we find that Jesus refers to Lazarus as a friend (v. 11) and that those who later witness Jesus' grief remark on this love (vv. 35–36). Second, the setting John provides for the narrative also makes it plain that Jesus will give life to Lazarus at the cost of his own. Accordingly, he ensures that when Jesus learns of Lazarus' illness he is in a place of safety, away from Judea and from those who threaten his life (10:40–42; cf. 10:31–39),

which means that Jesus' decision to return there places his own life in danger, as his disciples are quick to point out (11:7–8). Thereafter, the risk becomes reality: as a consequence of the miracle and the stir it causes, the authorities in council agree to put Jesus to death (11:45–53).

It is in this context that John intends his description of Mary in 11:2 to register with his readers. Having first introduced the family and located their home (v. 1), he then reminds them that it was Mary who anointed Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, thus anticipating the story that appears in the following chapter (12:1–8). To the point here, nonetheless, is that he expressly links the two narratives and intends Mary's role as anointer to be recognized throughout. This has an important bearing on what happens when Mary, who has so far sat in the house (11:20), meets Jesus on the Bethany road (11:32–33). On seeing Jesus, Mary falls at his feet, where she echoes Martha's opening words but then falls silent (v. 32; cf. v. 21). Jesus' response at the sight of Mary's grief and of the mourning party is remarkable in its intensity: John records that he became "angry in spirit and troubled himself," a powerful inner turmoil that strikes a very personal note (v. 33; see also v. 38). This is underscored by the fact that John will soon use the second verb (trouble) to describe Jesus' agony of soul at the prospect of his own death (12:27; 13:21). Once again, it seems, John's readers are invited to recognize the shadow of the cross in this account. Already primed to identify the woman at Jesus' feet as the one who will anoint him for burial, they are unlikely to miss the point.

Finally, we come to the anointing scene itself, with Martha serving and Mary again at Jesus' feet (12:1–8). It is noticeable that John makes much of the lavishness of her gift – a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and enough, he adds, to fill the house with its fragrance (v. 3). Prophetic of Jesus' burial (v. 7; cf. 19:39–40), Mary's gift, in its very extravagance, mirrors Jesus' supreme act of self-giving love. At the same point, a further affinity between the two figures is discernible: in her posture and in her actions, Mary prefigures those of Jesus himself as he washes and wipes the feet of the disciples whom, John tells us, he loved to the end (13:1–11).

As Christian tradition developed beyond John's time, Mary of Bethany, her counterpart in Luke 10, and the anointer in Luke 7 would eventually become conflated into the image of Mary Magdalene, penitent prostitute and darling of the visual arts.

**Bibliography:** ■ Edwards, R. B., *Discovering John: Content, interpretation, reception* (SPCK; 2014) 124–30. ■ Esler, P. F./R. A. Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha: A Social-Scientific and Theological Reading of John* (London 2006). ■ Haskyns, S., *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (London 1993). ■ Haskyns, S., *Mary Magdalene: The Essential History* (London 2005).

Wendy E. S. North

#### 4. Mother of James and Joses

Mary the mother of James and Joses appears in the Synoptic Gospels and is variously referred to in relation to her sons. In Mark she is the mother of James the younger and of Joses (15:40), Joses (15:47), and James (16:1). In Matt, she is the mother of James and Joseph (27:56), which is a variant of Joses, and thereafter the "other Mary" (27:61; 28:1). In Luke, she is the mother of James (24:10).

Mary was a follower of Jesus who provided for his ministry in Galilee before travelling with him to Jerusalem (Mark 15:40–41; Matt 27:55–56; Luke 23:49, 55). Despite a lack of details about this Mary, she plays an important role in the narrative as she is one of two named witnesses, with Mary Magdalene, to the death (Mark 15:40; Matt 27:56; cf. Luke 23:49), burial (Mark 15:47; Matt 27:61; Luke 23:55), and resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:1–8; Matt 28:1–10; Luke 24:1–12).

Some scholars, such as Gundry, have identified this Mary with the mother of Jesus due to an overlap in their children's names (Gundry: 977). This solution also relieves perceived tension resulting from the presence of Jesus' mother at the Crucifixion in John 19:25. However, the connections are tenuous and should be rejected. The synoptic crucifixion accounts record there were other women present at the Crucifixion, not just those named (Mark 15:40; Matt 27:55). Furthermore, Mark elsewhere refers to Jesus' mother by linking her to Jesus (3:31–32; 6:3) and never in relation to her other sons.

Mary has also been identified with Mary of Clopas from John 19:25. As Bauckham noted, it would be peculiar for Mary the mother of James and Joses to be referred to by those sons if she were also the mother of the more prominent and well-known Symeon (Bauckham: 210). Thus, it is best to see this Mary as a distinct character.

The modern debates and confusion over the identity of this Mary are nothing new and in many ways mirror debates from the earliest period. Chrysostom mistakes Mary of James and Joses for Mary the mother of Jesus (*Hom. Matt.* 88). Jerome took different positions on the issue over time. In ca. 383 he argued that Mary of James and Joses was not Mary the mother of Jesus and his argument rested on the assumption that Mary of James and Joses was the same as the Mary of Clopas (*Helv.* 16). However, in a letter from ca. 407, when delineating between the many Marys of the gospels, Jerome presents our Mary and Mary of Clopas as distinct women (*Epist.* 120). A passage mistakenly attributed to Papias of Hierapolis but written by Papias of Lombardy in the 11th century identifies Mary of James and Joses with Mary of Clopas (Lightfoot: 273).

The importance of Mary of James and Joses, along with the other women, in the gospel stories as a female witness to the life, death, and resurrec-

tion of the Christ is a frequent point of discussion with early writers. Origen beatifies the women by connecting their presence at the cross to prophecy in LXX Isa 27:11 (*Comm. ser. Matt.* 141) while Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine discuss the prominent roles of the women as a reversal of the hierarchies of creation and the fall (*Comm. Matt.* 39.3; *Serm.* 232).

Depictions of this particular Mary within art are hard to be certain of since it is often unclear which gospel account is behind a given work. The earliest known example is the baptism fresco at Dura Europos from the mid-third century. Together, the "three Marys" form a common element of many Renaissance era paintings of the Crucifixion and tomb scenes, such as van Eyck's "The Three Marys at the Tomb."

**Bibliography:** ■ Bauckham, R., *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (London 2002). ■ Gundry, R. H., *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1993). ■ Kraeling, C. H., *Excavations at Dura Europos. Final Report 8, Part II: The Christian Building* (New Haven, Conn. 1967). ■ Lightfoot, J. B., *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1902). ■ Miller, S., *Women in Mark's Gospel* (JSNTSup 259; London 2004).

Jacob W. Peterson

#### 5. Wife of Clopas

Mary τοῦ Κλωπᾶ is mentioned in the NT only in John 19:25, where she is one of the women standing near the cross of Jesus. John lists Jesus' mother, her sister, Mary of Clopas and Mary Magdalene but it is unclear whether this is intended to refer to two, three or four women. Since the first option (Jesus' mother = Mary of Clopas, her sister = Mary Magdalene) is unlikely, the second woman is either unnamed or Mary of Clopas is the sister (or some other family relative) of Jesus' mother. For stylistic reasons some interpreters prefer there to be four women (cf. Peshitta) forming two symmetric pairs and corresponding to the four soldiers dividing Jesus' clothes (19:23). The *Gospel of Philip*. 32, which seems to refer to John 19:25, lists three women: Mary, the mother of Jesus, her sister, and the Magdalene. The construction with the genitive τοῦ Κλωπᾶ results in further ambiguity, in that it could indicate either the wife, a daughter (cf. Coptic NT) or the mother of Clopas. Drawing on Heggesipus, who mentions a Clopas, the brother of Jesus' foster father Joseph (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3:11) and understanding Mary as his wife, she could also be the sister-in-law of Jesus' mother. If Clopas and the Cleopas of Luke 24:18 are the same person, his wife Mary could be the unnamed disciple travelling to Emmaus with him. On the basis of the parallel account in Mark 15:40 she has also been identified with the mother of James the Less and Joses, which would mean that Clopas and Alphaeus were the same person.

**Bibliography:** ■ Bauckham, R., *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (London/New York 2002). [Esp.

ch. 6]. ■ Blinzler, J., *Die Brüder und Schwestern Jesu* (SBS 21; Stuttgart 1967). [Esp. ch. 7] ■ Klauck, H.-J., "Die dreifache Maria. Zur Rezeption von Joh 19,25 in EvPhil 32," in id., *Alte Welt und neuer Glaube* (NTOA 29; Freiburg, Schweiz 1994) 145–62. ■ Michaels, J. R., *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich. 2010). [Esp. 953–56]

Stephanie Janz

## 6. Mother of John Mark

Mary (NT Μαρία; Vg. *Maria*) was the most popular female name in 1st century CE Palestine. This Mary is the name of John Mark's mother (Acts 12:12). As is common in Luke-Acts, the author names significant female members of the circle of Jesus' disciples (cf. Luke 8:1–3) or the early Christian church (Acts 9:36–43; 16:11–15). She is portrayed by the author of Acts as a person of financial means: she owns a large house that can accommodate "many" believers in Jerusalem and she has a servant named Rhoda.

**Bibliography:** ■ Keener, C. S., *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (3:1–14:28), 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich. 2013).

Frank Dicken

## 7. Of Rome

Though often overlooked in church history, that Mary of Rome worked hard (πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν) for the Roman Christians could suggest, according to Pauline usage, some sort of leadership role (Schreiber) but at the very least, mention of her activity implies that it – and the activity of other prominent women (Rom 16:1–3, 7, 12) – was exemplary and worthy of recognition (Scherer). John Chrysostom and Origen both understood this work to involve teaching. While for Origen the work of such women in God's churches consists in teaching younger women how to behave primarily at home (*Comm. Rom.* 10.20; PG 14.1280), Chrysostom saw women like Mary as outpacing men in teaching the truth, though he limited their teaching to the private sphere (*Hom. Rom.* 31; PG 60.668–69). The earliest manuscripts are divided as to whether Rom 16:6 refers to Mary or Miriam. The latter is the majority text reading and may recall Miriam the prophetess (Exod 15:20; Mic 6:4; cf. Num 12) and priestess (Num 26:59; 1 Chr 6:3) of the HB/OT.

**Bibliography:** ■ Bray, G. (ed.), *Romans* (ACCSNT 6; Downers Grove, Ill. 1998). [Esp. 371–72] ■ Scherer, H., "Die Mühe der Frauen: 'Charismatische Gemeindeleitung in Röm 16,6.12,'" *BZ* 60 (2016) 264–76. ■ Schreiber, S., "Arbeit mit der Gemeinde (Röm 16:6, 12): Zur versunkenen Möglichkeit der Gemeindeleitung durch Frauen," *NTS* 46 (2000) 204–26.

Phillip A. Davis Jr.

## Mary, Apocalypses of

*The Apocalypses of Mary* or *Apocalypses of the Virgin* (6th to 9th cent.) discussed here is mainly derived from the Greek literary tradition, but also the Georgian,

Syriac, and Latin literary traditions. *The Apocalypses of Mary* is closely related to the texts of the *Transitus Mariae* – a term used to encompass all of the apocryphal, hagiographic, homiletic, and hymnographic writings about Mary's final fate.

*The Apocalypse of Mary*, or *Descensus ad Inferos* of Mary, belongs to a very particular literary genre dealing with the topic of Mary's intercession or mediation for the dead in the underworld. This writing aims to soften, through Mary, the fate of the damned soul held in hell. This type of text is, in a way, the equivalent of Jesus' *Descensus ad Inferos*, of which one of the earliest attestations would be found in the untitled *Pilate's Acts*, a text dating back to the 4th century. As early as the 4th century, the literary developments of Jesus' *Descensus* took place within the context of the debates on the human nature and the divinity of Christ. It is quite possible that this is also the case for *Descensus of Mary*, but at a later date. *The Apocalypses of the Virgin* is discussed fairly often in the Greek tradition, as well as in the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopian, Georgian and Armenian traditions (BHO 646–52). It is just as frequently present in the many Slavic traditions and in the Romanian tradition. However, it is apparently absent in the Coptic and the Latin traditions (at least, for the latter, as an independent text). Its absence in the Coptic tradition may seem odd; the absence in the Latin tradition is more readily understandable based on the extensive diffusion of the *Visio Pauli* (5th cent.). It is quite possible that Paul's *Latin Apocalypse* served as a substitute for the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* in the West.

In the Syriac tradition, on which the Arab tradition (including the Ethiopian tradition) depends, there is apparently no independent text entitled *Apocalypse of the Virgin*. The story of the apocalypse is always incorporated into that of the dormition.

The Greek text of the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* is one of the most highly characteristic literary forms, such that the devotion in the Byzantine tradition is described in terms of intercession or Mary's mediation for the dead. One of the attributes given to Mary in the Byzantine Greek tradition is that of "Merciful Mother or Merciful Virgin." This work has had considerable influence in the Byzantine world on speculations concerning the whereabouts of the hereafter beyond the grave and the fate of mankind after death.

In the Greek manuscript of the *Apocalypse of the Virgin*, (6th to 7th cent.) during her lifetime Mary requests to first visit hell and then paradise, guided by the Archangel Michael and four hundred angels. The description of the torments is interesting and the details of the tortures suffered by the sinners are abundant. There is no doubt that the Greek version of the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* has had the greatest influence on Byzantine iconography of hell's torments.